

Edward Patchell to Andrew Jackson, August 7, 1824, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

EDWARD PATCHELL TO JACKSON.1

1 Patchell was long a hat manufacturer in Pittsburg. See Thomas Hamilton to A. J. Donelson, Nov. 26, 1829, Library of Congress, Donelson Papers.

Pittsburg, August 7, 1824.

My dear Sir, I had the honour of receiving your letter of the 16th may dated Washington City, which I woul[d] have on the instant promptly replied to, but about that very period of time I had granted permission to my friends to use my name as a candidate for Brigadier General; and there were eight candidates before the publick, of the most popular Gentlemen within the bounds of the Brigade; When a meetting was advertised to be held in the Courthouse, where there assembled upon the occasion upwards of one thousand of our citizens; the names of the several candidates ware put on nomination, and balledted for viva voice, when they were severally hissed by nine tenths of the multitude; Untill my name was reached on the list, when shouts of Old Hickory resounded from all parts of the house, nine cheers for Old Hickory, was the word, "when the crowd burst in upon me where I was seated at the counsel table" and bore me out on their sholders into the public square; I assure you General I felt more proud of your nick name "than I now feel of the Generalship, notwithstanding I have been elected by a much larger majority than any other of my predecessors for any office whatever in this County since the beginning. And I must confess had not it been for your sake I never would have yielded to become a candidate at this stage of life. Your friends here had applied to me at an early hour, I peremptorily declined the honour they purposed to confare on me; they then took up Major Piers, at

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which event the few the very few enemies which we have left you here, begun to rejoice and anticipated a Glorious triumph, as the poor Major altho a full blooded Jacksonian “yet he had but very little acquaintance throughout the bounds of the Brigade, and did not possess that digree of popularity which would warrant or justify the risque of your honour”, which your friends here considered staked on the result of the Election; I therefore was again applied to, and I gave my consent; And truely General, notwithstanding I have been Elected to that honourable post, I confess I am very unquallified to discharge the duties of any office whatever, as I have always throughout the whole course of my life” kept on the back ground well knowing my own imperfections; And since I have commenced to give you a brief outline of this affair of the Generalship, which bares more the resemblance “of a Historical detail, than a letter of information: I will beg leave to entertain you for a moment with a bare out line of my life, the part of the world” I was raised in, and the poor chance I had of receiving a polished education the alone accomplishment “which adorns the Genius of a promising youth.

My Father lived on the Faughan Water, a inferiour stream of no great magnitude, which emptied into the River Foyle a few miles below the City of Londonderry in the North of Ireland; He was a plain country farmer”, and aspired no higher than many others of his good neighbours, thought if he sent his children to a common country schoolmaster for a few years “to learn Reading Writing and Arithmetick, that was all sufficient; I did not know the use of a classick Education at the time, being a miner; therefore since I have been in America” for the want of that all necessary accomplishment, I have stood in the rear rank, and never ventured in the front, untill Andrew Jackson the son of my dear countryman”, was anounced a candidate for the first office in the peoples guift, And altho I well knew that my talents were unadiquate to the task, yed I depended not only on my personal courage alone, but I trusted in my God, and your God, whome hath raised you up for to be a Saviour and a deliverance for his people. I considered you ware justly entitled to a nation's gratitude, and altho I well knew that I was not a politition”, yet nevertheless ware I to try” I could do something. And if Henry Baldwin² “had as he promised” assisted me, I

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would not have had the half of the trouble or difficulty in turning the people on the straight course” that I had; Mr. Baldwin wrote the advertisement” for the call of the first meeting which was held in the Courthouse in favour of your Election, and sent it to me to get it published, the meeting was very numerous”, much larger than any ever had been known heretofore—after the Chairman and Secretaries were appointed” Mr. Baldwin stated the object of the meeting, and your name were placed at the foot of the list; Wm. H. Crawford got one vote, H Clay five, J. Q. Adams two, J. C. Calhoun four, and Gen Andw Jackson upward of 1000, a resolution was then offered “that Henry Baldwin be appointed to write an address” to the democratic republicans throughout the U. S. But the very next day”, as I have understood, Mr. Baldwin met with Judge Riddle” your old boot maker,³ and he hooted him and fully persuauaded him “that Wm. H. Crawford would be taken up in Caucus, and would be Elected President beyond any manner of doubt. From that day untill this, Mr. Baldwin has never been known to write the scrape of a pen either for or against you, But I believe has ever since been a praying” good God, good Devil, not knowing “whoes hand he might fall into.⁴

² Baldwin; see p. 184, note 2.

³ James Riddle, associate judge, 1818–1838, of the Pittsburgh court of common pleas, whose assistant judges were laymen.

⁴ Baldwin, writing to Abner Lacock Feb. 29, 1832, said that he was a Jackson man in 1823–1824.

I was then drove to the alternative of inlisting young la[w]yers” under my banner, meer boys, as Judge Riddle used to call them; But with the assistance of the boys, I have performed wonders. I have reduced the *Lousie* party here from 10,000 to something less than fifty, and they are chiefly the antient and notorious wire workers, they are the Office holders and office hunters”; and all they can do now” is grin and shew thier teeth. They have made more than one attempt to stab you through my sides, in the collums of their

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Statesman;⁵ But I stand here on too high ground for their arrows to reach me. General, I have never had the pleasure of seeing your face, and perhaps never may untill we meet in the Kingdom of Heaven", but you have my heart, and may that divine power" whoes almighty arm hath both defended and protected you "through every peral and danger" support and uphold your honour in old age and let the result of your pending Election" be what it may, give God the praise, his will be don on earth, for you and I have but a few years according to the common course of nature to live, therefore we ought to daily make preparations" for the awful change that awaits our mortal flesh.

⁵ A Pittsburgh newspaper, established in 1820.

I trust my dear Sir, that by this time you are fully sensible" that I have no possible motive in view" by becoming your friend and advocating your cause, for It is too well known that I am neither an office hunter, or an office holder, I assure you Sir, that when I have don all that I can to promote your interest, that I have don no more than what my heart tells me" is the bounden duty of every true and faithful American. I take the liberty of sending you a letter, which I lately received from New-York, a perusal of which will at least be amusing, if not very edifying. May God bless you Jackson.

I have a Mountain, and a Walker here for assistants, meer boys, whoes oritorial powers can astonish the wollds.

If you had only a Stephen Simpson⁶ in every State in the union, you would be Elected President by the largest majority ever heard of in the known world. and had I have been in possession of the Learning, talents and political knowledge of Henry Baldwin, I have vainity" to think that long err now, I would have reasoned the people into a sense of their duty. But Jackson, I must repeat it, I have done no more than my duty, and I even forbid you "return me thanks: And should we fail this Election, I will pray my God' to spare life" untill I see Andrew Jackson President of the U States. and then let me close my eyes in peace, adue

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6 Editor of the *Columbian Observer*, Philadelphia.

I have brought John McFarland here, from Harrisburgh, and Established a new paper called the Allegheny Democrat, He is both an able and a capable Editor. I have also appointed him Brigade Major; my boys are very active and vigilant, and renders every assistance within the compass of their power towards the performance of the Editorial duties of the paper, and they have also contributed liberally towards purch[as]ing the Establishment, as Mr. McFarland was both poor and pennyless. They caucus party here are purty well subdued, yet as your friend Stephen Simpson remarks, they keep up a semblance of at least high sounding words: They have held a meetting here a few days since in the Courthouse to chuse delegates to send to Harrisburgh, to form a opposition ticket, and after all their exertions, after sending men on horse back with handbills all over the county; to their greate mortification" they only could muster 19—In both City and County. General you may rest assured of the vote of Pennsylvania.